

**In the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

- 1 1. (Currently Amended) An online shopping system for various retailers, the  
2 online shopping system ~~electronic (e-) commerce system~~ comprising:  
3 a shop server provided on which is a virtual shopping mall  
4 including a plurality of virtual shops operated by the various retailers;  
5 ~~a virtual-shop retailer system having at least a terminal provided~~  
6 ~~for each of a plurality of retailers who own the virtual shops; and~~  
7 an e-commerce support system shared by the online shopping  
8 system with the various retailers ~~and connected to the virtual-shop retailer~~  
9 ~~system~~ via the Internet, said e-commerce support system including a  
10 Web server, a database, and an application server; and wherein the e-  
11 ~~commerce support system includes;~~  
12 virtual-shop retailer systems established for the various retailers,  
13 said virtual-shop retailer systems each having at least a terminal, and  
14 selectively including a Web server, a database, and an application server  
15 provided by one of the various retailers, and said Web server of said e-  
16 commerce support system, said database of said e-commerce support  
17 system, and said application server of said e-commerce support system,  
18 wherein said virtual-shop retailer systems each maintain one of said  
19 plurality of virtual shops and uses functions selectively provided by said  
20 application servers to accomplish e-commerce.  
21 ~~a Web server to which each retailer makes an access via a~~  
22 ~~terminal of each retailer over the Internet, thus performing access~~  
23 ~~management for each retailer;~~  
24 ~~a database storing data for each of functions required for e-~~  
25 ~~commerce; and~~  
26 ~~an application server to establish each of the functions by using~~  
27 ~~the stored data, necessary functions among the functions required for e-~~

28 ~~commerce being offered to each retailer and available through the~~  
29 ~~terminal of each retailer over the Internet, the necessary functions~~  
30 ~~depending on each retailer having the virtual-shop retailer system having~~  
31 ~~at least the terminal.~~

1 2. (Canceled).

1 3. (Currently Amended) The online shopping system ~~electronic commerce~~  
2 ~~system~~ according to claim 6 4, wherein each of said functions function  
3 selectively provided by said application servers is put into a module.

1 4. (Currently Amended) The online shopping system ~~electronic commerce~~  
2 ~~system~~ according to claim 1 further comprising:  
3 a table storing membership numbers assigned to customers by  
4 each of the various retailers ~~retailer~~ and membership identification  
5 numbers assigned to customers by said e-commerce support system ~~the~~  
6 ~~electronic commerce supporting system~~ irrespective of each retailer but  
7 corresponding to the membership numbers;  
8 a customer database storing personal data on the customers for  
9 each of the membership identification numbers; and  
10 a certificate server to authenticate a customer using the table and  
11 the customer database in response to a membership number sent by one  
12 of the various retailers ~~a retailer~~ via the terminal thereof, a result of  
13 authentication being sent only to the terminal of the one of the various  
14 retailers ~~retailer~~ which has made an access to the certificate server for  
15 customer authentication.

1 5. (New) The online shopping system according to claim 1, wherein the  
2 databases selectively included in the virtual-shop retailer systems store  
3 data required by said functions selectively provided by said application  
4 servers to accomplish e-commerce.

- 1     6.     (New) The online shopping system according to claim 1, wherein said  
2           functions selectively provided said application servers include a virtual  
3           shop creation function, a charge/settlement function, and a delivery  
4           management function.
- 1     7.     (New) A method for an online service provider to establish an online  
2           shopping system for various retailers, comprising the steps of  
3           providing a virtual shopping mall on a shop server capable of  
4           supporting virtual shops;  
5           contracting with the various retailers to operate the virtual shops;  
6           providing access to an e-commerce support system, the e-  
7           commerce support system including a Web server, a database, and an  
8           application server;  
9           sharing the Web server of the e-commerce support system over  
10          the Internet, the database of the e-commerce support system, and the  
11          application server of the e-commerce support system with the various  
12          retailers;  
13          establishing a system for a particular retailer of the various  
14          retailers to maintain one of the virtual shops, wherein the system includes  
15          a terminal having a WWW-browser, and selectively includes a Web  
16          server, a database, and an application server provided by the particular  
17          retailer, and the Web server of the e-commerce support system, the  
18          database of the e-commerce support system, and the application server  
19          of the e-commerce support system; and  
20          operating the system to maintain the one of the virtual shops,  
21          wherein the system uses functions selectively provided by the application  
22          servers to accomplish e-commerce.
- 1     8.     (New) The method of claim 7, wherein a first system for a first retailer  
2           does not have a Web server provided by the first retailer, the first system  
3           established by connecting to the Web server of the e-commerce support  
4           system, wherein a second system for a second retailer does not have a

5 database provided by the second retailer, the second system established  
6 by connecting to the database of the e-commerce support system, and  
7 wherein a third system for a third retailer does not have the application  
8 server provided by the third retailer, the second established by  
9 connecting to the application server of the e-commerce support system.

1 9. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the functions selectively provided  
2 by the application servers include a virtual shop creation function, a back  
3 office function, a charge/settlement function, and a delivery management  
4 function.

1 10. (New) The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of renting  
2 modules containing the functions provided by the application server of the  
3 e-commerce support system, the modules being accessible over the  
4 Internet.

1 11. (New) The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of  
2 creating the one of the virtual shops using the virtual shop creation  
3 function, the virtual shop creation function providing pre-designed page  
4 templates, wherein the pre-designed page templates are edited by the  
5 particular retailer; and  
6 registering commodities associated with the one of the virtual  
7 shops using the pre-designed page templates.